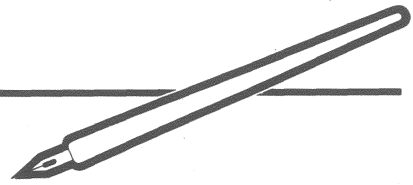




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Perspectives on the Christian Reformed Church⁴

In previous issues we discussed parts of the interesting new book: *Perspectives on the Christian Reformed Church. Studies in its History, Theology, and Ecumenicity*. Of course, we cannot deal with every study here. Therefore, we will give only a few comments regarding two other "Studies in Theology" namely on "The Kingdom" and on "Mission Zeal" while a little more attention will be given to the study "Observations on the Concept of the Antithesis."

The kingdom of God

The first study to be mentioned here has the title: "The Kingdom of God in the History of the Christian Reformed Church." Let me give two quotations to arouse the appetite of the reader: "The brilliant insights [in the meaning of the Scriptural concept of the kingdom of God for our thinking and life, J.G.] which Volbeda [professor at Calvin Seminary until 1952, J.G.] conveyed to a Westminster audience in 1939 were not shared with his Calvin Seminary students. Martin J. Wynngaarden's *Future of the Kingdom* and Oswald T. Allis' *Prophecy and the Church* helped to ward off the dispensational kingdom views, but they did not replace those erroneous views with a Biblical view of the kingdom with its life-embracing demands." The conclusion is: "It would be an exaggeration to say that the CRC has lost the Biblical vision of the kingdom. Several different meanings would be suggested, however. The CRC certainly lacks a united mind on this crucial subject."

The reader knows what is meant here with "kingdom." It is the Scriptural and Reformed principle that Christ is King over all of life in all its aspects and that, therefore, believers must acknowledge Christ as their king in all aspects of their life. This principle is the basis for Christian school education, Christian political organization and action, Christian social work, and so on. It is interesting to read about the difference between the Reformed Church people in The Netherlands and those in North-America. In The Netherlands this principle resulted in the establishment of Christian social, political, and labour organizations while in North-America the Americanization of life in the Reformed Churches prevented the establishment of such Christian associations. The exception is that after the second World War, especially in Canada, the CLAC (Christian Labour Association in Canada) and the Society for Justice and Liberty were set up by those who were connected with the A.A.C.S. in Toronto. Does the Canadian situation prevent us, Canadian Reformed people, from applying the basic Reformed principles in this country? We do not have a Reformed Labour Organization in which both employer and employee are organized. We do not have a Reformed political party here, although we are starting political study and action associations, which is a step in the right direction — confessing Christ Jesus as King and Lord also for our government and politics. But we have to be careful, too. We must be aware that we live in this world as pilgrims, and that we cannot bring paradise to this world. Satan and his evil spirits are here as "the world rulers of this present darkness" (Eph. 6:12). We must not act as if we can bring all things, of this modern life here on earth, under the rule of Christ. Christian dancing and Christian movie

theatres are an impossibility in this world, to mention just a few examples.

Mission zeal

With interest I also read the study "Mission Zeal in the Christian Reformed Church: 1857-1917." In the early years more attention was given to doctrinal purity than to reaching out. In 1962 the accusation was launched that "bad doctrine . . . had been the cause of bad practice, of inept and ineffective evangelism." That bad doctrine is the doctrine of election and of limited atonement. This accusation caused so much commotion that a Synod appointed a committee to deal with it. The conclusion of this committee was that there had been a lack of missionary zeal and activity, but that this was not caused by "our thoroughly Scriptural doctrines of the saving and irresistible grace of God and the particular atonement; but in many other things," like "spiritual apathy due to material prosperity, a feeling of inferiority and fear to speak to others, a lingering immigrant mentality, weariness because of poor results in evangelizing, not enough individual prayer for the unconverted, and a preoccupation with the theological correctness during the twenties, which hindered compassionate interest in people outside the church."

The church should always occupy itself with theological correctness, not in the least because that is the right basis for all evangelism. But the one thing must not exclude or hinder the other. When we read this diagnosis (see Acts 19:66, p. 504), the thought can come up that we have a mirror here in which we can recognize our own situation. One also wishes that the CRC had continued to occupy themselves with doctrinal purity, and theological correctness, besides increasing mission zeal.

The antithesis

The last *Theological Study* gives us "Observations on the Concept of the Antithesis." It deals with the question whether we must base the antithesis on God's decrees of election and reprobation, or on the existence of the regenerate and the unregenerate, or on the difference in life between believers and unbelievers. The author chooses the last one, although to some extent he also wants to reckon with election and regeneration.

According to him, "to construe the antithesis in terms of double predestination is . . . to give to that doctrine an abstract and unreal cast." We do not know who is elect and who is reprobate. The antithesis takes place, however, in the concrete, real social arena, where there are both believers and unbelievers. A further argument of the author is that building the antithesis mainly on election and reprobation makes one lose "sight of the fact that the struggle takes place also within the Christian himself," that is, the old man fights against the new man within the Christian.

In my opinion, this element of the struggle of the believer against his old sinful nature should not receive so much weight here in the doctrine of the antithesis. This doctrine is based first of all on Genesis 3:15. God puts and maintains enmity between Himself and the devil; between Christ and the devil;

between church and world, between believer and unbeliever; between those whom He regenerates and those who are unregenerate. The apostle Paul maintains this antithesis very strongly in II Cor. 6.

Therefore, I cannot follow the author in his conclusions. He points out that believers and unbelievers, living in the same world, working with the same facts according to the same laws of human logic reason, have so much in common. There is so much common grace left. That makes working together with unbelievers in various social organizations possible for believers.

He mentions that Karl Barth and Emil Brunner, great theologians of fame in the time before and after the second World War, criticized the establishment of Christian organizations. This criticism had a profound effect in The Netherlands where many Christians joined the socialist Labour Party. This was called the "break-through" ('doorbraak'). Professor K. Schilder and others have fought against this "break-through" as a breaking down of the antithesis and therefore of Christian life and Christian principles.

In this study we notice the same "break-through." We read: "though *persons* [emphasis is mine, J.G.], in keeping with the principle of the antithesis, are either for or against the Christ, and thus unable to escape into some neutral area, *organizations* can be, and in the West usually are, neutral with respect to religious commitments. Most of them are nonideological constructs established to achieve generally human

goals. They are indeed not specifically Christian, but neither are they anti-Christian; they are simply non-Christian." Is it this line of "break-through" thinking that makes many Christians join non-Christian labour unions and other organizations, even when such an organization compels its members to do things that are in conflict with the Word of the LORD?

The apostle Paul writes: "Do not be mated with unbelievers. For what partnership have righteousness and iniquity? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? What agreement has the temple of God with idols?" Here we have the antithesis. In my opinion, we can work together with unbelievers, with whom we live in the same world, only when they are willing to take over the goals and the principles of the Scriptures. And that will not often happen.

As I see it, the common grace concept as that was pronounced at the Synod of Kalamazoo, in 1924, causing the beginning of the Protestant Reformed Church, leads here to a breaking away of the antithesis. And this is connected to ignoring what the Canons of Dort teach on the point of double predestination. It is a sad thing that the author of this study openly rejects the doctrine of the Canons regarding God's decree of reprobation. He writes: "The traditional doctrine of double predestination is itself a complex theological construct, the Biblical basis of which is not clear at all."

Let this be a warning for us.

J. GEERTSEMA

Hal Lindsey₂

Political and military speculations

4. Limitations

Sometimes we can clearly see in our personal life, in the political or economical development, and in world history in general, the fulfillment of a prophecy (or should we not rather say "a" instead of "the" fulfillment of a prophecy?). That can be a great comfort. We know that the Lord is at work. He gathers His Church and prepares everything for the day of judgment, which at the same time shall be the day of the marriage feast of the Lamb.

We have to watch the signs of the times. But we also have to be careful in calling something the *final* fulfillment of a prophecy. It might be a fulfillment but perhaps an even greater and more glorious (or more severe) fulfillment will come. In the signs of the times we can hear the footsteps of Christ, who is coming, but we cannot determine the exact time of His return. In Matthew 24:36 and 44 Jesus says: "Of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only . . . Therefore you also must be ready; for the Son of man is coming at an hour you do not expect."

We should not pretend to know exactly how and when Jesus Christ will come back, but that is the trap into which people like Hal Lindsey have fallen. We already mentioned Daniel 12:9. Daniel receives a revelation from the Lord, but he does not really understand its meaning. Therefore, he asks the angel who speaks to him: "O my lord, what shall be the issue of these things?" The angel answers him: "Go your way, Daniel, for the words are shut up and sealed until the time of the end." Even Daniel, the prophet himself, is not able and not allowed to understand the meaning of the prophecy. Hal Lindsey is aware of this text. He quotes this text in his book several times. But it does not prevent him from developing all kinds of speculations about "the time of the end." What does he say about this text and what does he do with it? He writes: "God revealed to Daniel that his prophecies would not be clearly understood *until* the end times, i.e., the times when the events predicted would begin to take shape. The key that would unlock the prophetic book would be the current events that would begin to fit into the predicted patterns" (p. 169-170). He agrees

that Daniel did not understand the meaning of his own prophecy. It would be shut up and sealed until the time of the end. But, he says, "Today, Christians who have diligently studied prophecy, trusting the Spirit of God for illumination, have a greater insight into its meaning than ever before. The prophetic word definitely has been 'unsealed' in our generation as God predicted it would be" (p. 170).

His reasoning is that Daniel did not understand the meaning; for him the words of the prophecy were sealed "until the time of the end" and, according to Lindsey, we are living in "the time of the end" so for us it is not shut up and sealed any longer.

In this way he ignores the fact that "the time of the end" is used in the Bible in different ways. It refers to the *period* of the New Testament as well as to the *day* of Christ's return. It is impossible to tell exactly when this "time of the end" comes, when it begins, and when it will be completed. He also ignores the fact that most prophecies have more than one meaning and more than one fulfillment. They can have a fulfillment in our actual time and circumstances but there can and may be a final fulfillment in the future, a fulfillment in a way we cannot as yet imagine. Therefore he pretends to know all kinds of details about political developments in the near future, especially as far as the State of Israel is concerned. He comes to very speculative and far-reaching conclusions in this respect. It all

sounds very impressive and it attracts a lot of attention at a time when people are eager to listen to soothsayers, but he is really transgressing the limitations of our human understanding. He does not take to heart the message of Daniel 12:9, nor the warning of our Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 24:36.

Lindsey also presses his "Israel ideas" and his theory about the future of the State of Israel too much into his explanation of the Bible. Everything *has* to fit in his schedule. That sometimes leads him to very strange and fantastic explanations of certain texts. Apparently he is too preoccupied to be able to give a balanced exegesis of certain texts.

We should not pretend that we understand every text. The best and most careful and humble approach is sometimes the so-called "non-lique," that means the recognition that the matter is not clear and that we do not know for certain what the meaning is.

5. Passing the test

On page 9ff. of his book Hal Lindsey writes about the question of whether we can trust a prophet. What are his credentials? That is an important point! Many people have presented themselves as prophets while they were no prophets or, even worse, false prophets. Many have come to mislead people with their pretended prophecies. Lindsey writes: "How would people know whether a prophet who claimed to speak God's message was a pure prophet?" (p. 9). In this respect he refers to Deut. 18:21, 22. There we read: "If you say in your heart, 'How may we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?' — when a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the word does not come to pass or come true, that is a word which the LORD has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously, you need not be afraid of him."

The main point in Lindsey's reasoning is that, if someone makes a prediction and his word comes true, he has proven to be a real prophet. That is what he calls "passing the test." His reasoning seems to be based upon Scriptural proof. And the conclusion should be that, if Lindsey's predictions come true, he has proven to be a real prophet, sent by the LORD.

However, we have to be careful in this respect. Lindsey uses this text in the wrong way and he lets the text say just the opposite of what it really says. In Deut. 18:22 the LORD does not say that if someone pretends to speak in the name of the LORD, and his word comes true, it is a proof that the LORD has sent him. No, it says just the opposite, "if the word

does *not* come to pass or come true, that is a word which the LORD has *not* spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously, you need *not* be afraid of him."

This text can be used only as a proof that someone is *not* a prophet, that the LORD did *not* send him. But it certainly does not mean that the opposite is true. It is quite well possible that someone's word *comes true*, and that he still is a *false* prophet.

If we want to know if someone is a true prophet we have to search whether his message is in accordance with the whole Bible. The fact that a certain prediction comes true is not a proof of his di-



vine mandate. It can very well be that the LORD is testing His people to see whether they pay attention to the whole Bible rather than to someone who comes with speculative statements, irregardless of how convincing they may *seem* to be. We have to compare Scripture with Scripture to find the real message. In this respect we have to compare Deut. 18:22 with Deut. 13:1-3. There we read: "If a prophet arises among you, or a dreamer of dreams, and gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or wonder which he tells you *comes to pass*, and if he says, 'Let us go after other gods,' which you have not known, 'and let us serve them,' you shall not listen to the words of that proph-

et or to that dreamer of dreams; for the LORD your God is *testing* you, to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul."

When we compare both Scripture portions, Deut. 18:21, 22 and Deut. 13:1-3, the message can be clear. If someone pretends to speak in the name of the LORD, and his word does *not* come true, then he has *not* been sent by the LORD. You should *not* listen to him. However, if his word *comes true*, you should not believe everything he says without comparing it with the Word of God. It is quite well possible that the LORD is testing you to see whether you are listening to the whole Word of God. Someone may use his seemingly trustworthy testimony to lead you astray, and make you believe a wrong message, even to make you follow other gods.

That is what we have to keep in mind when we read predictions like Hal Lindsey's. There are impressive predictions about the future of the State of Israel and about the political development in the Middle East. Even if his predictions do come true, it does not prove anything. Decisive is whether his message is in accordance with what the whole Bible tells us.

In "passing the test" it is not enough to have a high score of reliability or accuracy in predicting political developments. We should search the Scriptures and compare Scripture with Scripture to see whether it is according to the whole Word of God.

In the next section we will mention an example of his preoccupied exegesis, which is dominated by his "Israel concept."

6. The Middle East

To give you an example of the very speculative predictions, to which Hal Lindsey comes, we will pay attention to his so-called exegesis of Daniel 11:40-44. We will see how he tries to make everything fit his concept of Israel. He comes to far-reaching predictions about the political and military development in the Middle East.

In Daniel 11:40-44 we read: "At the time of the end the king of the south shall attack him; but the king of the north shall rush upon him like a whirlwind, with chariots and horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall come into countries and shall

"He also predicts an attack by the Western Allies in the Middle East to destroy the Russian army. After that a final clash will take place between the Western forces and the army from the east, headed by Red China. This Middle East battle will reach its awful climax in the valley of Meggido, close to the port of Haifa in the northwestern part of Israel."

overflow and pass through. He shall come into the glorious land. And tens of thousands shall fall, but these shall be delivered out of his hand: Edom and Moab and the main part of the Ammonites. He shall stretch out his hand against the countries, and the land of Egypt shall not escape. He shall become ruler of the treasures of gold and of silver, and all the precious things of Egypt; and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall follow in his train. But tidings from the east and the north shall alarm him, and he shall go forth with great fury to exterminate and utterly destroy many."

We have to keep in mind that this is the vision, at the end of which the angel says to Daniel: "the words are shut up and sealed to the end." Even Daniel himself did not understand and was not allowed to know the meaning of this prophecy. However, Hal Lindsey says: (p. 170) "Today, Christians who have diligently studied prophecy, trusting the Spirit of God for illumination, have a greater insight into its meaning than ever before. The prophetic word definitely has been 'unsealed' in our generation as God predicted it would be." He suggests that we have arrived at what is called "the time of the end" and that we are (or rather that he is) able to understand, in every detail, the meaning of these words.

He comes to very strange and remarkable conclusions, which are not always based on solid grounds, and are often simply statements without any ground.

When Daniel 11:40 speaks about "him" in the expression "the king of the south shall attack him," the first question should be: who is referred to in this text as "him." Linguistically it refers back to "the king" mentioned in verse 36. From him it has been said that he "shall do according to his will; he shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak against the God of gods. He shall prosper till the indignation is accomplished; for what is determined shall be done."

Some commentators argue that reference is made to the Antichrist, others suggest that a certain king is meant,

either an ancient or a future king. Hal Lindsey, however, states without any proof, that reference is made to "Israeli leaders" (p. 142).

Daniel 11:40 says: "At the time of the end the king of the south shall attack him." According to Hal Lindsey the meaning of this text is that the Arab-African Confederacy, headed by Egypt (King of the South), will launch an invasion of

Israel (p. 142). That is the first step in the development which brings the fulfillment of this prophecy. The next step is what we read in Daniel 11:40b "but the king of the north shall rush upon him like a whirlwind, with chariots and horsemen, and with many ships." That means, according to Hal Lindsey, an invasion of the Middle East by Russia. They will come from the north. They have already longed to invade the Middle East since the Napoleonic wars, and now they will get their chance (p. 142). They will invade the Middle East with many ships. The current buildup of Russian ships in the Mediterranean serves as a significant sign of the possible nearness of these events, according to Hal Lindsey (p. 146). The invasion will also take place over land, "with chariots and horsemen." The "chariots" is the mechanized army and the "horsemen" is the cavalry. As far as these "horsemen" are concerned it is clear to Hal Lindsey that this text refers to Russia. He writes: (p. 59) "It is interesting to note that the Cossacks have always loved horses and have been recognized as producing the finest army of cavalry in the world. Today they are reported to have several divisions of cavalry. It is believed by some military men that cavalry will actually be used in the invasion of the Middle East just as Ezekiel and other prophets literally predicted."

The third step is that the Russian army will have to withdraw from the Middle East because they will be alarmed by the news that the armies of the north and the east are mobilized against them. He bases this on verse 44, where we read:



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“But the tidings from the east and the north shall alarm him, and he shall go forth with great fury to exterminate and utterly destroy many.” That means, according to Hal Lindsey, that the Oriental powers, headed by Red China, will be mobilized (from the east) and that also the Western European Countries will be mobilized (the north). This threat will force the Russian army to withdraw from the Middle East (p. 147).

Many more details are given by Hal Lindsey. He also predicts an attack by the Western Allies in the Middle East to destroy the Russian army. After that a final clash will take place between the Western forces and the army from the east, headed by Red China. This Middle East battle will reach its awful climax in the valley of Meggido, close to the port of Haifa in the northwestern part of Israel. However, when it seems that all life will be destroyed, Christ will return to save men from self-destruction (pp. 151/7).

This is, in a summary, the picture Hal Lindsey gives of the political and mili-

tary development in the Middle East.

The first thing we have to notice when we consider this theory is that all his speculations about the political and military developments are based upon his preoccupation with the future of the State and the people of Israel. Moreover, it contradicts the warning, given in Daniel 12:9, that these words are shut up and sealed to the time of the end. And above all, Christ Himself has said in Matthew 24:36 “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only.” According to Hal Lindsey’s theory Christ’s return will not be a surprise, but an event that can be exactly timed by men.

Of course we have to watch the signs of the times. We have to see and to hear the footsteps of our Lord Jesus Christ in the developments of world-history. But the Bible also tells us that Christ will return at a time when no one expects it. In I Thess. 5:2 we read: “For you yourselves know well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.

When people say, ‘There is peace and security,’ then sudden destruction will come upon them as travail comes upon a woman with child, and there will be no escape.”

In a world in which people feel insecure and are looking for trustworthy “soothsayers,” millions of people listen to such theories. The sales figures of these kinds of books are a clear proof of what people like to hear. Hal Lindsey’s book is the “#1 Bestseller of the decade.” But we should not let ourselves be deceived by such speculations. Not even if some of these predictions should come true. That would not be a matter of “passing the test,” as Hal Lindsey tries to make us believe. We have to see whether it is in accordance with the whole Word of God. It is also possible that “the LORD your God is testing you, to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul” (Deut. 13:3).

— *To be continued*
W. POUWELSE

The Hope of the Resurrection

The following is the text of a speech given to the Christian Funeral Benefit Association of Strathroy and vicinity on Jan. 23, 1981; slightly revised.

Considering the purpose and character of your Association, I thought it best to consider with you this evening the hope that marks the Christian funeral, and the joy that may also be present. The hope we may have is the heart of the gospel: the resurrection from the dead. Yet precisely because the resurrection has such a central place in the gospel there are varying views about it, varying confessions concerning its implications for our life today and for the way we bury the dead in our midst. Only if we retain the authentic apostolic confession concerning the resurrection of the dead will we be able to be comforted when we, too, are called to bury our dead: only then will we be able to be comforted concerning *our own* life and death (Lord’s Day 1).

For I daresay this comfort is rapidly losing its influence in the world today. The joy that may be part of a funeral often is not present because the basic message of the gospel is either ignored or misunderstood. Nowadays, one notices new and novel ways of removing the dead from the earth. We have recently had a good example in the death of the pop musician John Lennon. The surviving widow,

Yoko Ono, was very emphatic about the fact that there would be no burial, no funeral; instead there was a cremation accompanied by a silent vigil. Here all hope in a physical resurrection has disappeared. In fact, the vigil was meant to show that Lennon never died; his spirit lives on forever, as Yoko Ono put it. Especially in these differing customs do we see the wide divergence in confession and hope concerning the resurrection. Here we see the contrast between the Christian gospel and the mystic religions of the East, which all teach forms of reincarnation, but deny a *physical* resurrection — the resurrection of the *body*.

There are also considerable differences among those who profess the Christian religion and the article of faith concerning the resurrection of the dead. That is little wonder since, as I mentioned, this confession forms the heart of the gospel. The famous chapter of the resurrection, I Corinthians 15, stresses the centrality of the resurrection and shows how basic it is to our faith. “If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile, and you are still in your sins,” v. 17. This is also testified in Lord’s Day XVII of the Heidelberg Catechism, where no attempt is made to confirm or prove the resurrection — it is simply treated as a fact that must be accepted, a fact on which the whole Christian faith stands or falls.

Thus, it can only be worthwhile to reflect briefly on what one would confess when he wishes to uphold the confession, “I believe in the resurrection of the dead.” What is the content of the hope of the resurrection? Does this article of faith direct our attention to heaven, so that we only hope to go to heaven when we die, or hope that our loved ones will go to heaven when they pass away? What attitude must characterize the Christian funeral? Do we find our joy in the fact that one has finally come to the end of his “earthly pilgrimage,” so that he was permitted to rid himself of his body, and find full peace and contentment in the “after-life” in heaven? Or do we continue to offer prayers for those who have gone to the benevolent realm of the beyond, as the Romanists do?

These kinds of attitudes have long attacked the true gospel, and in many cases they still do. These attitudes were common in orthodox Lutheranism, and in pietistic circles; they all testify to the strong influence of mysticism on Christianity. Life in the body was always an unhappy sojourn of misery and temptation. The main object was to flee the body, and so to be able to soar with the angels in heaven and find full peace with God by being freed of any physical trappings. Bach’s church cantatas often reflect these pietistic sentiments, in which life in

the body is considered a lower form of existence.

Calvin, too, is often accused of pietistic leanings, since he, too, freely distinguished between body and soul, and stressed that our eternal salvation concerns the plight of our *souls*. However, Calvin often spoke of “life in the body,” and this is a much better expression to use. Here the heart of the difference between Lutheranism and the Reformed Churches comes to light. Calvin is accused of being pietistic, but this is not a fair criticism, in my view. One of his most beautiful chapters in the *Institutes* is the one entitled “On Meditating on the Future Life,” Book III, Chap. ix. This chapter has been criticized as being pietistic because of its excessive concentration on the future life and on the aspect of meditating. Must we only sit and meditate on the future? However, this chapter must be seen in its context; previous to it, Calvin speaks about some of the hardships and persecutions that those who uphold the testimony to the gospel may expect in this world. Suffering and even death are not spared them. But they have a sure hope which, by meditating on it and its contents, can bring great comfort and strength in every trial. That is the hope of the future life — and here Calvin means the future life *in the body*, life that we may expect after the Lord Jesus has come back to earth.

Here the Reformation Churches, in distinction from later Lutheranism, follow the line of Calvin, which is the line that the apostle Paul takes in that momentous Chapter 15 of I Corinthians. The heart of the Christian hope is not that a deceased person may finally be free of the body, and live with the Lord Jesus in heaven. In the Bible, the accent is never on heaven, or on the so-called “intermediate state.” That, too, is a time of working and faith for departed souls. The real heart of the hope in the resurrection is that we rejoice in ongoing life *in the body!* The future life for Calvin is not life in heaven, without the body, in some spiritualized form; the future life is the life we may await at the return of Christ — life in an incorruptible body. Where now the body is weak, unstable, and perishable, we hope for the continuation of our lives in new bodies, raised up by the Lord, which are imperishable, because Christ has overcome the power of death, I Corinthians 15:20.

One should notice the difference between these two views, since this is where the dividing line in Christendom falls. Both Roman Catholicism and Lutheranism were influenced by the same humanistic philosophy that troubled the Corinthians: the philosophy of the Greeks that radically separated body and soul, and

placed all accent on the life of the soul. The body, so the Greeks said, was part of the “lower” material world. All material things change and are perishable. But the soul is immortal, and lives forever. This is what led the Corinthians to have their doubts about the resurrection. They were under the influence of mystical ideas and strange philosophies. But the apostle points them to a concrete resurrection of the body, and proclaims the redemption of the material body by Christ, who came into the world and assumed our flesh and blood.

The apostle follows a line of argument in I Corinthians 15 which is meant to counteract the humanistically influenced philosophical spirit of the Corinthian believers. They considered themselves to be wise in their knowledge, and considered any idea of a decaying body rising again to be utterly absurd and foolish. The apostle shows, however, that God has made foolish the wisdom of the world with His wisdom, the wisdom that comes from above. What is not possible with man is possible with God, I Corinthians 1:18ff. And the apostle finds a good example in that most natural and everyday occurrence in the world — the germination of a seed. The Lord gives His glory to the body through His power and might. The same body which dies and decays rises up again in a new and different way, that is, as an incorruptible body. How? Only through the power of God!

And certainly there is a big change from one form to another. Perishable becomes imperishable, weakness becomes power. So great is the change that we are unable to fully fathom what we shall be, I John 3:2. For who can imagine a physical body which is also a spiritual body? Yet the apostle takes great pain to assure the readers in Corinth that it is all *the same body* which dies, and rises again. At the return of Christ, the life begun here on earth is taken up again — we pick up the thread again, as it were. And the life of prayer and faith in heaven is an integral intermezzo — but no more than that. We do not hope in an *intermezzo* — our hope is in the resurrection of the *flesh*, and with that, *everlasting* life.

Thus we may say our hope is in new life *in the body*, but yet in the same physical bodies we have now. The same body will be changed. So the image of sowing seed becomes a reality at the graveside — we literally “sow” our loved ones, knowing that all who have died in the faith will be raised again, just as a healthy seed must germinate and break forth out of the ground. The LORD does not leave His work “hanging in the air.” He will finish what He has begun. Psalm 138. Therefore, the home of the Holy Spirit, our bodies, *remains* the home of the Holy

Spirit, now and forever. The LORD will continue in the body what He has begun with us here in the body.

This is also what characterizes a *truly Christian* burial. We do not have services for the dead, or long eulogies. The requiem is foreign to the Reformed Churches. True Christian funerals are characterized by brevity, certainty, reverence, and above all, joyful hope. The Church must never linger and weep over the grave. And we do not deck our graves with ever-present flowers, as a ritual of good will to the departed. We rest in the hope of *ongoing* life in the body.

In fact, the way we find it in Calvin and in Lord’s Day XVII only leads us to make a more pointed conclusion: with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit the *real* resurrection actually begins on this side of the grave. The assurance of faith — including faith in the resurrection of flesh — stems from the fact that we may make a small beginning of new life *in the body* here, on *this side* of the grave. Precisely this proves the powerlessness of the grave, and also defines the intermediate state as it really is, namely, an intermezzo before the real content of our hope becomes reality.

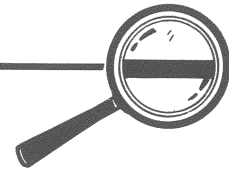
This is also in the spirit of I Corinthians 15. For the apostle warns that denying the resurrection cuts the *power* and *effect* of the gospel out of the Christian life. We rise to good works *in the body* today, and must do so, Lord’s Day XXXII.

Cutting out the gospel of the resurrection as it occurred in Corinth, can only result in moral laxity and loose living, as the apostle says, “Let us eat and drink for tomorrow we die.” Then he adds, “Be not deceived: ‘Bad company ruins good morals,’ ” vv. 32, 33.

If we deny life in the body of the *future*, there is no point in making a beginning to new life in the body *today*. And was not that the major problem in Corinth?

That is why the hope of the resurrection cannot be severed from our fight against sin in the flesh here today, and why we must strive to keep our bodies holy and pure, according to God’s law. Rejecting the true Christian doctrine of the resurrection and substituting it with more mystical variations will also result in relaxing the demands of the law on life in the body today. That is why we must do all we can, in both word and deed, to maintain the Reformed confession. For only in this way do we find concrete assurance and thus real joy in sorrow — because we know that all we must undergo here on earth will receive its true and full (and fully disclosed) meaning when we are at home, in the joy of our Lord.

J. DEJONG



Russia allows freedom of religion. Does it?

The *Lutheran Theological Journal*, (Australia), of December, 1983, printed the following little article which I take over via the *Christian Beacon* of March 1, 1984.

Freedom of religion as the USSR sees it

The following sections quoted from the REGULATION OF RELIGIOUS SOCIETIES IN THE LATVIAN SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLIC are enlightening both in themselves and in the light they throw on the torturing of language in the interests of state policy. The kind of action suggested at the end of the study in the present issue of the LTJ by Daniel Ch. Overduin would get short shrift in Russia. Italics in text are mine.

H.P. Hamann

1. All citizens enjoy the freedom of practicing religious cults and anti-religious propaganda.

No one has the right to avoid one's civic duty on grounds of religious convictions.

2. Religious congregations may be formed if there are not less than 20 believing citizens who have reached the age of 18; who are of one and the same cult; and who have come together for common satisfaction of their religious needs.

3. Free performance of religious rites is ensured only as long as they do not interfere with Soviet legislation, social order, and do not jeopardize citizen rights.

4. Religious congregations and ministers of religion *are forbidden to:*

1) permit speeches during the service which contradict interests of the Soviet society;

2) in any manner encourage the believers not to fulfil Soviet law, not to fulfil one's civic duty, and not to take *active* part in state, cultural, social and political life;

3) *provide members* of a religious congregation with *material support*;

4) organize special prayer and other meetings for *children, young people and women or general meetings*, groups, circles, sections for Bible and catechetical, literary, handicraft and labour, or to arrange excursions and set up children's playgrounds, open libraries and reading rooms, or organize sanatoriums or medical aid. Only books relating to the religious cult may be kept on the premises of churches and worship buildings;

5) *involve minors* in active *participation in religious rites* (preaching, serving, chorus singing, orchestra playing, processions, etc.).

5. Religious processions and the performance of religious rites and ceremonies out-of-doors, and also in apartments and houses of believers shall be allowed only by special permission, for each individual occasion, from executive committee of the district (or city) Soviet of Workers' Deputies.

6. The teaching of religious doctrines may be permitted only in institutes of religious education that are opened in accordance with established procedure.

IV. Executive organs of religious congregations

7. Ministers of religion may not be elected to executive and auditing bodies of a religious congregation.

Ministers of religion shall have no right to interfere in administrative, financial, or economical activities of a religious congregation, nor may they interfere in the activities of its executive and auditing organs.

Communism seeks to destroy religion

Of interest is also the following information, that regards the communist plans for a takeover of the island of Grenada. Those were not realized, but shattered, through the American invasion. At that occasion the American army captured many official documents. Some of those documents showed the plans of the communists with respect to the churches. In *Presbyterian Journal*, of March 21, 1984, an interview was printed that IRD (the Institute on Religion and Democracy of Washington, D.C.) had with Dr. Michael A. Ledeen, Senior Fellow at Georgetown University Center for Strategic and International Studies. I quote sections of it.

Dr. Ledeen is a former Rome correspondent for *The New Republic* and former executive editor of *The Washington Quarterly*. An occasional consultant for both the State Department and the Defense Department, he is currently analyzing documents of the "New Jewel Movement," the revolutionary party in Grenada which he says enjoyed the direct support of U.S. church leaders and organizations while the party held power on the island prior to the U.S. invasion last fall.

IRD: What is the special significance of these documents?

DR. LEDEEN: They comprise the first full documentary record of a country that was taken over by the Soviet Union and its proxy forces. Consequently, the Grenada archive constitutes an historical source of enormous and quite unique importance. Moreover, I

would wager that if we could lay hands on the Nicaraguan archive, we would find a replication of what we have found in Grenada. So I think it is a real case study of Soviet and Cuban behaviour in this hemisphere.

IRD: What is there of special interest to church-goers in the United States?

DR. LEDEEN: Well, once you start reading these documents you see that a great deal of very scarce money and manpower was invested in the indoctrination of the people of the island. Ideology meant a lot.

Secondly, religious ideas were clearly viewed as an obstacle to the process of political indoctrination. There was one secret agreement between the Cuban Communist Party and the New Jewel Movement which arranged for exchanges of personnel: Grenadians going to Cuba to be trained and Cubans coming to Grenada to train other Grenadians there. The agreement quite explicitly provides for sending people to Cuba to be trained in dealing with the churches while Cubans skilled in handling churches would take up assignments in Grenada.

The purpose of this exchange was to strengthen a campaign of unrelenting hostility and suspicion by the government against the churches. This campaign was carried out in a variety of ways. Given a pretext, the government would simply get rid of the religious leaders who were explicitly anti-communist. On one occasion a Methodist minister who refused to perform a funeral service for a communist was simply thrown out of the country.

But their longer run plan is set forth in a memorandum drafted by the chief of their internal security structure, Major Keith Roberts. It is dated July 12, 1983, and called "Analysis of the Church in Grenada."

The last two pages consist of a series of recommendations which begin by saying that the party must infiltrate the churches and watch them all very carefully, and that they must build up the communist mass organizations, the national youth organization, the national women's organization, the pioneers and so forth, as alternatives to the churches. Point seven says that they should remove from primary schools all deeply religious head teachers by whatever means most suitable, replacing them with more "progressive elements." Political education was to be introduced into all the social studies curricula down to the primary schools and the secondary schools. The document called for eliminating the Mass from Sunday morning radio programs.

IRD: That sounds like what is happening in Nicaragua.

DR. LEDEEN: Overall, the plan was very much like the Nicaraguan model. The Grenadians speak of trying to substitute clergy and lay people from other communist regimes for the traditional religious authorities on the island. They talk of bringing in people from Nicaragua and other Latin American countries linked, as Major Roberts puts it, to the theology of liberation and to the idea of a church committed to revolutionary positions.

IRD: Do you find in these documents any sign that this support for liberation theology and the "people's church" derived from any genuine Christian commitments on the part of New Jewel leaders?

DR. LEDEEN: No, they were Marxist-Leninists; they were not Christians. In the final analysis they were aiming at raising a new generation of Grenadians who were atheistic.

IRD: One of these documents refers rather favourably to the Caribbean Conference of Churches, which denounced the joint U.S.-Caribbean action almost immediately after it began. But we later learned that the

Grenada Christian Council itself was a very strong supporter of the action. How do you explain the statement of the Caribbean Conference of Churches, and the apparent assumption of the New Jewel Movement that it was an ally?

DR. LEDEEN: It looks like the New Jewel Movement was right. The Caribbean Conference of Churches certainly wasn't representing the interests or the views of the churches on Grenada. The New Jewel Movement considered the churches on Grenada to be enemies. And, as the accounts of the government's internal espionage organization make clear, the Grenadian churches did not like communism.

IRD: Immediately after the invasion, something in this country called the Committee in Solidarity with Free Grenada issued a press release under the headline "Religious and Community Leaders Condemn U.S. Invasion of Grenada." This release came out of the office of the Caribbean and Latin American affairs staff person at the United Methodist Church's Office on the United Nations. And among the signers of the release were a number of officials of the U.S. National Council of Churches. Is there evi-

dence in the records of the New Jewel Movement that it worked to cultivate allies in church bodies here?

DR. LEDEEN: Yes, in fact it had lots of allies of all sorts in the United States. They periodically traveled around this country, touching base with their supporters here. We have found the references in documents to what they have called their U.S. Front Group, which consisted of a variety of people: Some people in the mass media; some in the universities; a substantial number from Communist Party, USA.

Above we read about a plan in a memorandum of the chief of the internal security structure, Major Keith Roberts. Part of this document follows here:

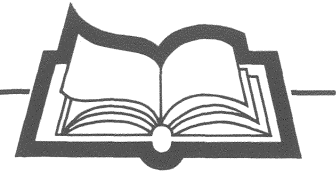
This speaks very clearly. It shows what is going on in the Central American region. At the same time, the governments and all those who have large possessions in these Latin-American countries should bring a change in the social conditions in their midst. Social injustice cries for revolution.

May God show mercy to the people in this and other areas in our tumultuous world.

J. GEERTSEMA

- Removing from Primary Schools, all deeply religious head teachers by whatever means most suitable, replacing them with more progressive elements. This should be done no later than the end of this month.
- Introduce Political Education as that or Social studies in every classroom in the Primary and Secondary Schools from this September, use the most progressive teachers within the school system (chosen by teachers committee) to teach these classes. Use Marle Hodge and Didious to write up the materials for the courses.
- Strengthen Science Education — theory and practical — in every school and in the community through C.P.E. and Film shows.
- Cut back on all religious programmes on R.P.G. Substitute on Sunday morning voice cast of the masses on the progress of the projects.
- To promote contacts among Clergymen and members of the Laity from Nicaragua and other Latin American countries linked to the theology of liberation and, in general, to the idea of a church committed to Revolutionary positions.
- To implement the visits of Pastors from the Grenada Protestant Churches belonging to the Caribbean Conference of Churches (CCC) of which the Evangelical Churches of Cuban in a number to short annual course, in light that the comrades can solve the language question.
- More dialogue with the West Indian Priests, Nuns and Brothers in the Church and schools by the Leadership.
- Opening up M-L Bookshop in different parishes of the country.
- Getting M-L literature into all schools by September.
- Explore possibility of getting Father Martin and L. Montague to visit Cuba.
- Step up the system to monitoring of all Religious manifestation in the state, and position being taken as regard the work permit of way-side Preachers entering the country to preach, and immigration position on these way-side preachers.

MAJOR KEITH ROBERTS



“... and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.”

I Corinthians 15:5

Unfinished Business

In the list of resurrection appearances in this monumental chapter on the resurrection, the apostle Paul mentions a specific appearance to Peter, one of the twelve apostles. This appearance is first on the list, and Peter is also referred to by the new name given to him by the Lord when He first appeared in the circle of John the Baptist and gathered His disciples, John 1:42. The very use of this new name tells us that this mention of a specific appearance to Peter is more than just Pauline politeness. For here the apostle deals with what constitutes the *heart* of the proclamation, and the message of the apostolate. Central here is not the person, but His divine *office*.

As a person, Peter stood close to Judas Iscariot. Judas betrayed the Lord Jesus; Peter denied Him. Both expected an imminent messianic kingdom of glory. But one was loved, the other hated. Jesus had said, “Simon, Simon, behold Satan demanded to have you that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail; and when you have turned again strengthen your brethren,” Luke 22:31, 32. And the devil did sift him, so that he denied his Master three times. Then came that penetrating *look*, and Peter went out and wept bitterly, Luke 22:61, 62. As far as we know, he did not see any other events surrounding the death of Christ. That look was all he had, and with that look he went into his night of bitter weeping.

This same disciple who failed to see the drama of the end, also was more hesitant on the morning of the resurrection. John had seen more, John 18:15, 16; he also believed sooner, John 20:8. But Peter’s doubts still cling to him, and he holds back. Yet the Lord Jesus does not let him go. Had He not prayed for him? And He had given Simon his new name, saying, “I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it,” Matthew 16:18. Peter was the first among the disciples, leader and representative. Matthew 10:2. He was chosen by the Lord to take a leading role, the one who was to be the *rock*,⁴ the groundwork of the Church.

So we notice Paul record the Lord’s appearance to him *first*. Nothing is told us of this appearance, but we can assume that it was one of deep joy and thankfulness for Peter. The same eyes which looked at him so deeply after the denial now look on him again — in love, affection and forgiveness. He is restored to office, and charged with passing

on the message. Luke 24:34. He becomes the *rock*, not through his own power, but through the grace of the merciful Lord, and through the power of His Word and Spirit, by which the Lord returns to him and strengthens him again. Indeed, Word and Spirit make Simon the rock, so that what he becomes for the Church is nothing less than a completely divine work — communicated by grace alone, through faith.

And what the Lord Jesus was for Peter He also is for all those included in Peter — the Church of all ages. He returns, even when men fail. He continues to gather, defend and preserve — also in spite of us and our denials. For He has prayed, and still intercedes for all His own, John 17. His Word and Spirit still form the rock, and hold the Church to the truth, so that she may be “pillar and bulwark of the truth.” In the appearance to Peter, we see that the Lord is *faithful*, and that His work is sure.

At the same time, we see that it does not depend on men. Peter wavered more often, and in a sense needed more support than his fellow disciples and apostles. He was quick to react, but slow to believe. He *needed* this appearance — that was his weakness. He also *receives* it — that is God’s unsurpassing grace, and Peter’s strength. He becomes *rock* through the *risen* and appearing Saviour.

Peter’s experiences then tell us that we must never believe in the Church, and never see it as a work of men, a work bound to the earth. Peter’s history testifies against putting trust in persons, and warns against all personalism in the Church. For he became Cephas, brother, rock, and friend only through the cleansing power of the Word and Spirit. The power of the resurrection made him what he was; the power of the resurrection is the real foundation of the apostolate.

And here the end of Paul’s letter ties up with its beginning. In Corinth too, there was already a “Cephas party,” group-oriented believers who had chosen their man, I Corinthians 1:12. But Paul shows here that Cephas was not a party man; he was *ecumenical* foundation, divine groundwork to the Church of all ages. And that foundation testifies to the message of *grace alone*, through the blood of the Lamb. He returns; He appears; He restores; and He also will restore and perfect all who cling to Him.

J. DEJONG



Any wedding anniversaries to be mentioned?

Yes, and we start with the earliest one, the one that is long past already by the time of this writing. I am referring to brother and sister H. Metzlar of Toronto, who celebrated their fortieth wedding anniversary on April 4, if I understood the information of the Toronto Bulletin well.

The Metzlar's may be living in Toronto now, this was not always the case. For many years they resided in Matheson, and have tried to keep the small "House Congregation" there going for as long as they could. When, finally, it appeared that no growth could be expected and that, on the contrary, people moved away more and more, they, too, decided that the time had come to pull up their stakes and move towards Southern Ontario. That's what they did.

During the years of their marriage they experienced joy as well as sorrow, births as well as death in the family. However, their strength was always in their God and Father, and with them we are grateful for the gift bestowed upon them in reaching this milestone. We also wish them the continued strength and grace of our God and add to this the wish that they may remain fruitful for the service in His kingdom.

For the second wedding anniversary, which is still a matter of the future, we have to go to Coaldale. There brother and sister Cor and Mar Van Seters will celebrate their fortieth wedding anniversary on May 24th. I learned this from *Clarion*. And the names which are found in the advertisement show the great place which they have occupied in the lives of many others. I was aware of it that they got married during the second World War, for brother Van Seters sometimes told us that Germans, checking the papers of travellers, could hardly believe that he was married, seeing his youthful looks; I was not aware of the precise year but know it now.

We wish to add our congratulations to the many they will receive. Our personal experience is that you are always welcome at their place and that they will go out of their way to make you comfortable. It is not up to me to describe their activities in the midst of the Church; others are more competent to do so than I am, but they will accept it from me when I say that we and many with us congratulate you from the heart with this gift from our God and rejoice with you. May our gracious Father remain your refuge also when the strength diminishes and it appears no longer possible to do all the things you were used to do and when the activities have to be curtailed. One can always remain useful for God's Church and kingdom in one way or another.

Where shall we start with the news from the Churches? Perhaps the best thing is to go out West first.

Now that Smithers is expecting another minister to arrive some time this summer, the question of the parsonage came up. The "Consistory decides to sell the old parsonage due to age and the unsuitability to add on. (The whole electrical system would have to be upgraded if an addition were made.)" The smartest thing, I think, is when a Church has a parsonage built close to the Church building, preferably on the same lot. Then you won't have the difficulty of having to change things when another minister comes. The minister knows then what he can expect and what he will have to do when he comes. Take it or leave it, would be the slogan. Mind you, then a Church should make sure that the house is indeed built as a parsonage, with easy access to the minister's study. As far as this goes, I could recommend to interested parties to have a

look in Fergus. Perhaps some things could still be improved on, but it would give good ideas about accessibility of the minister's study also when someone wishes to see the minister. He should not be required to walk all through the house before reaching it, especially not when there are still children living at home.

In the Fraser Valley a Study Center has been set up, as previously reported. "Study Center also hopes to develop a resource branch that will make it possible for you to rent and/or borrow audio and video cassettes, books, films, and other educational material." Sounds quite exciting, doesn't it? Perhaps we get a second "Theological College Center" out West with library facilities. I put these words between quotation marks, for I know that it certainly is not the intention to have a competitive institution in the Fraser Valley: this Center is for all Church members who wish to increase their knowledge and thus to become more fit for the service in the Kingdom. It just occurred to me that there are tremendous possibilities when the plans can be realized. Perhaps I see too many possibilities, but I am thankful for the initiative and for the enthusiasm of the committee.

Regarding the various Churches, we start with Chilliwack. There are quite a few things to be mentioned from there.

"Pertaining to an organ. Council decides to work in the direction of a pipe organ. The Committee of Administration is charged to get as much information as possible regarding installation, financing, and other pipe organs."

Here we have another gratifying development. I had already heard from brother D.J. Zwart that Chilliwack was contemplating purchase of a pipe organ, but now I can quote from the official sources and do so gladly. It will be a tremendous asset for the Chilliwack Church, and their building is certainly suited for such an instrument. We hope for further electrifying information.

"The suggestion to change the windows in our Church building for coloured glass is rejected because of cost." It is a pity that this decision had to be made, for whenever I come in the Brampton Church building I look with admiration at the windows which show all sorts of colours. I do not know whether these are stained glass or just coloured glass, but they appeal to me. Is there not a brother among us who is retired and wants to take up producing such windows as a hobby? I have so many plans already that I am careful not to add one more, but I would love to start something in that line. Could I, via the news medley, bring such a brother into contact with the Chilliwack Church and, perhaps, other Churches?

"Council decided against the idea of putting Bibles and new *Books of Praise* in the pews since these books should be used all week and everyone should have one in his possession."

I can well understand this decision, for it is already a pity that our auditoriums are unused so many hours per week; if we add the cost of Bibles and Psalm books and consider that these, too, are used only a few hours per week, the benefit is not all that great. Besides, one gets used to one's own Bible and Psalm book. Oftentimes, when I preach somewhere else, a very diligent caretaker sees to it that a Bible lies on the pulpit open at the place from which the Scripture reading is taken, and that there is a *Book of Praise* open at the Psalm we are going to sing first. And there is practically no Church within our federation — except where they rent a building from

others — that does not have all the necessary books in the pulpit. Yet I always take my own Bible and *Book of Praise* along, for those are the books I am used to. And I think that we can use the money better spending it on Bibles and Psalm books which are lying there in the auditorium unused except for the four hours per Sunday people may use them. Besides, if people have to pay for these books themselves they will be less inclined to let their smaller children play with them during the services!

One more item from Chilliwack. "It was encouraging to hear that more people are planning to move to the Okanagan Valley." And from the Okanagan itself: "A request was made to have an additional collection in the summer months with monies going toward the upbuilding of the Okanagan Church. A letter will be sent to the Chilliwack Consistory for approval."

We now go to Abbotsford.

The only thing we have to mention about this Church is the matter of possible institution of a Church in the State of Washington. "Several matters were discussed pertaining to the upcoming informative meeting to be held with the brothers and sisters of the United States concerning possible Church institution in the State of Washington." As this is all the information which I have, there is nothing more that I can pass on to our readers. It is, in any case, a reason for joy that the question of this institution keeps having the attention and the interest of the brothers and sisters.

The matter of institution of a new Church is also still very much alive in the Coaldale area. "A letter from the Steering Committee in Taber thanked council for their advice given in regard to the institution of a Church in Taber. While not completely in agreement with all statements made in your letter, we at this time will abide with your advice not to take steps to establish a Church at Taber at this time. However, we do intend to continue to work towards establishing a Church at Taber in the future, in the spirit of the last sentence of your reply."

Of course, when a Consistory makes such a decision, the members have to abide by it. Yet I was happy to read that the Consistory did leave the door open for the future.

There is no doubt about it that the above decision also influenced another decision, namely, "C. of A. is instructed to send a letter to the Christian Reformed Church of Lethbridge asking a one year postponement in the decision of acceptance of their offer concerning the Church building." Putting one and one together, I conclude that the Congregation was not in favour of selling the Church building, at least not at this time, and that the possibility of institution in Taber after a year is seriously considered. We'll see.

Yes, and this brings us all the way to Ontario.

Or rather, let us go down to the States first of all.

"Rev. Kingma reported on the meetings with the Churches of Blue Bell, PA, and of Laurel, MD. The need of a 'missionary at large' was discussed." Both of the Churches mentioned are or were part of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and have had frequent contact with Grand Rapids and its minister. It would be interesting to take over the whole piece which Rev. Kingma wrote in the Grand Rapids bulletin, but this is more something for a Press Review. May the above information suffice. As for the suggestion of a "missionary at large," this might be a good idea, provided it is for more contacts than the two which are mentioned above; but perhaps there are more possibilities, of which our brothers and sisters south of the border are more aware than we are here.

Going up, we arrive in Hamilton.

Here, too, the matter of institution of a new Church keeps the minds and hearts occupied. The Committee studying the institution-question reported extensively in the bulletin, emphasizing that they have no authority to make a decision, but show-



55th Wedding Anniversary



Mr. and Mrs. H. Idema (nee van der Veen) hope to celebrate their 55th Wedding Anniversary, D.V., on May 16, 1984.

They were married in Buitenpost, The Netherlands, and later lived in Groningen. In 1959 they emigrated to Canada with Houston, BC as their destination.

They now live in Langley, BC and are enjoying their retirement in fairly good health.

The Lord blessed them with 3 daughters, 18 grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren.

They are very thankful to the Lord for all the blessings He has given them in all their years together. May the Lord be with them for more years to come.



ing in their reports that they have done their homework. Since no definite decision has been made, I have to say — again — that the above information has to suffice.

Hamilton's Consistory also held "a brief discussion . . . on whether or not the Congregation should rise when the minister approaches the pulpit rather than as is presently done. It was decided to keep it the way it is since it is done decently and in order." I am not quite certain about it, but think that the minister requests the Congregation to rise for the votum and the blessing. This is done in more Churches and this is how it is going to remain in Hamilton as well.

"It was decided to install Dr. Deddens as a minister of the Church at Hamilton, set aside for the task of teacher at the Theological College. The Consistory will write him a letter giving pertinent information, and include a statement expressing the expectation that the family will become members of the Church at Hamilton within a year of his installation date."

I can fully understand it that a Church would like to see all its ministers living within the area of that Church and as such I can appreciate Hamilton's stand. However, when a minister has been released from all work in the Congregation to teach at the College it does not appear proper to require of him that he move into that area. It is completely up to the professor himself where he wants to live and expressing an expectation such as Hamilton has expressed does not seem proper and fair to me. What if the other Churches start expressing the same statement? Prof. Selles is still minister of Chatham

and Prof. VanDam is still minister of Surrey; they both live far away from the Congregations whose ministers they are, be it that they, too, have been released for the specific task at the College. I think that it is putting too much of an obligation upon a professor to require that he lives within the Congregation whose minister he is. And if it is required of the family that they move, it would be no more than fair that the Church pays the moving expenses, plus an additional amount of alterations necessary, installation costs, for short. I don't think that it would be very eager to do so.

Burlington West's Consistory "decided upon recommendation of the Committee of Administration that the time has come to *ban all smoking* in the Church building. It stands to reason that we need *everyone's* cooperation in this respect."

Skipping Burlington East for a minute, we first go to Brampton.

"Since most of our Churches have a name, a request was made to think of a name for our Church as well. The Consistory would like to look into this matter if there is sufficient reason to implement a change."

Also in Brampton, "the Committee of Administration . . . recommends that a sound system consisting of earphones and individual volume control be installed. The Consistory approves of this." This, as I understand, is for the benefit of the brothers and sisters whose hearing has deteriorated due to age. It is good that we take measures to enable every one to hear what is being said, in order that no one depart hungry.

"A number of people met in the Church basement last Fall to discuss Christian secondary education for our children. At that meeting a committee was established to investigate the possibilities on how this could be accomplished." Thus the Orangeville *Sheepfold* tells us. A meeting was scheduled for April 23rd, where the result of the committee's investigations was to be discussed.

Yes, and now we return to Burlington East, for a specific purpose.

"The Dubai Organ Company was given an order to rebuild the pedal section of the organ, to repair the Great chest and to install a mellotone grille behind the great section, which will greatly improve both sound and appearance of the instrument."

Apart from that "mellotone grille" — about which I have my doubts — I can only express my joy at the decision to make the instrument more suitable for accompanying the Congregational singing. Especially the Churches that installed organs many years ago, oftentimes at minimal cost and with cutting corners due to lack of funds, are now faced with the necessity of either repairing or upgrading or even replacing their instrument. In Burlington East it is apparently possible to make the necessary repairs to the existing organ.

In Fergus — as I mentioned before — we are not that "fortunate," to use the (wrong) term for a moment. The organ we have did serve us for many years, but the need has become evident to replace it. At the congregational meeting which was convened for the specific purpose of discussing purchase of a new organ, the Congregation overwhelmingly advised the Consistory to go ahead with the purchase of the organ which I mentioned in a previous medley. No one can be happier about this than I am. It will be quite a while before we can dedicate it: we expect it not to have been completed before February next year, perhaps a little earlier. Pipes will have to be ordered, chests will have to be overhauled, and so on. It will be a three-manual organ, fit for congregational singing and for concerts as well. You can be looking forward to reading an enthusiastic report once it has been installed and been dedicated. I hope you can produce the patience needed for this; I hardly can but have to.

On this high note I sign off.

VO

Letter to the editor re News Medley, *Clarion* March 9, 1984:

Out of the gamebag.

No, no, we leave it as is.

In spite of the kind advice to change some things regarding this column (see *Clarion* March 9, News Medley).

Reasons? Well: 1. What might allude to the name of the local pastor is not the title but the subscription (sportsman).

2. The title indeed refers to the "product or intended victims" so to speak. And that is exactly the intention. Sportsman does not want to picture out himself, nor show his tools and material, no, he wants to pick up some game (game-wise). He uses his "hunterbag" to fill his "gamebag."

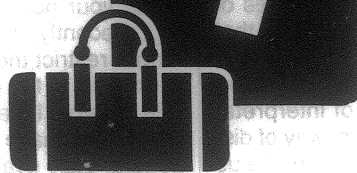
Too bad that my kind advisor did not see that. Otherwise he himself should have been found in the bag as part of the game. (re his remarks on "Christian" in the apostles creed: the holy, catholic, Christian Church *Clarion* Vol. 1, 1984). Too bad he did not mention *what* was in the bag of the Neerlandia Church bulletin. Here comes a tricky one: What is the game and who is the hunter?

What the younger folks (very important!) might expect by this word: game? Let them check a Webster *New Word Dictionary*. According to the flap, the world's *most up-to-date* and authoritative desk dictionary, with *clear precise* definitions and meanings in pace with the expanding *language of to-day's world*, all the eleven descriptions given there re "game."

And let them see the contents of the bag itself for a minute. I am not so concerned there would be a misunderstanding here. Anyway let us remain undersigning with

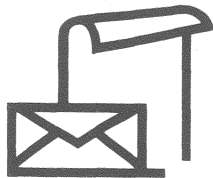
Sportsman

(Isn't a hunter the man for the really big game? I think, it all is not that important . . .)



Arrival of the K. Deddens family at Toronto Airport. (From l to r,) Prof. Van Dam, Mrs. Faber, Dr. Faber, Dr. and Mrs. K. Deddens, one daughter and three sons, Mrs. and Rev. VanOene. The sign in the background informs us that K.L.M. flight 691 from Amsterdam has arrived.

Letters to the Editor



Dear Editor:

In the *Clarion* issue of Jan. 27, 1984, we find under "International" on page 31 a "Comment" by Rev. Cl. Stam, that I would call a dangerous publication. I had hoped that in the following issues someone else would have pointed out that Rev. Stam was incorrect with his reporting and so has presented us with a one-sided view of the "Hofford" case, for which reason I write this letter.

The "Hofford" case is introduced by him to the readers, more or less, as the start of a reformation within the OPC, in which the OPC will be tested to be a "true" or "false" Church. Unfortunately, this might be a result of an un-Scriptural interpretation of our Confession concerning the Church. I am afraid that people are not always aware of the far-reaching consequences of such a view on the Church. Having read this "comment," the logical and important question for the reader will be: "Is the issue at stake really of such a nature and character, that we must- or are allowed to raise the banner and make it a dilemma of *Biblical or un-Biblical, obedience or disobedience, true or false?*" I deny this firmly and I am very disappointed that one of our ministers helps to put the "Hofford" case in such a light. We must be on the alert not to look through our own coloured glasses and be influenced in our judgment by our own prejudice!

Allow me to ask the following question at this point: "Did Rev. S., while writing this, take in consideration the historical facts?" For example (and I would like to remind the readers here about the past), our Churches, very well aware, I may assume, of the practice of the so-called "open" table, in our Synod "Coaldale 1977," did not hesitate to recognize the OPC as "true" Churches of Jesus Christ! Consequently, the fact that our Churches recognized them as such implies that the "open" table has been seen just as a "difference of interpretation or opinion" or a "different way of discipline," but not, as Rev. S. will make us to believe, an "un-Scriptural practice" or "contrary to the Word of God," with the consequence that a faithful minister would have been *forced to act contrary to the Word of God*. How far can we go, when we are not objective and don't show the right spirit of understanding!

The OPC has considered (not recently, but in its *history*) this practice to

be the most Scriptural and responsible way of discipline. For the spoken Word at the introduction of the Lord's Supper in the Presbyterian Church (and Rev. S. must know this just as well as I do) is a form of discipline, which clearly shows that it is not a "lack" but a "different form" of discipline. We see this also in their concern, when we read:

"The Presbytery felt that it would be wrong to exclude members of other (evangelical) Churches, in effect, that while the table should be *restricted*, it should not be *closed*. A worthwhile consideration, they looked at both sides of the medallion! By the same token, the General Assembly saw the "closed" table as a form of *denominational exclusivism*.

Rev. Stam would do the Church a true service when he could take this case out of that exclusivistic frame of *Biblical or un-Biblical, true or false* and bring it into a Scriptural dialogue.

Since the "Letter" form doesn't allow me to go farther into it, let it suffice to say that Rev. Hofford, the OPC, nor the gathering work of Jesus Christ is served by making it a case of "black" and "white," but by a Scriptural community spirit, that is anxious to serve each other in the communion of saints, with all humility, true love and understanding, fulfilling His command (I Cor. 12), being so instruments in the hands of Him, who alone gathers His Church.

Let us all be aware of the danger to form a stumbling stone on the road to the unification of Christ's Church.

B. BIKKER
Cloverdale, BC

Dear Brother in Christ
and the Reformed Faith:

Grace and peace to you in the name of God our Father and Christ His Son!

I first want to thank you for a well-reasoned and Biblical response to the points raised by J.P. Elliot in *Nederlands Dagblad*. In saying this, I must also point out that I am concerned about your position as well.

Recently, our session took action to further restrict the Lord's Table, perhaps in contrast to the position of the Burtonsville session. I fear that in many ways we in the OPC have been caught up in the general easy evangelicalism of our day. This can be seen in the approach of many churches in the OPC, where sessions permit anyone who has made a profession of faith and is a member in good standing of an "evangelical" church to partake of the Lord's Supper. As you so rightly point out, the lack of any discernable discipline in other churches can often mean that those who live in sin can

come to one of our churches and partake of the Lord's Supper.

My concern, however, stems from the fact that I personally feel a great need for the influence of the Canadian Reformed Churches upon the OPC and the Reformed community in general. It must always be kept in mind that we come from very different traditions and backgrounds. If we do not all have a common practice in all matters, it is not always attributable to a real theological division, but sometimes only because of the historical route that we have taken to get to where we are. For example, in our congregation we sometimes have conflicts because of the different historical antecedents of the English-speaking and the Spanish-speaking parts of the Presbyterian Churches. This does not, of course, mean that both are equally valid, and I think that the example of "close" or "closed" communion provides a good example. While we restrict communion, we welcome those who are members of churches with which we maintain fraternal relations. So, when Canadian Reformed people visit our congregation, they are welcome to partake of the Communion. They, however, believe that a letter is necessary before they are able to do so, and they customarily refrain. As far as I can see thus far, neither of us are wrong. In the case of Mr. Hofford, he was *not* compelled to serve the Lord's Supper improperly by the Presbytery or General Assembly, but by his session. Having failed in his efforts to reform their practice, he was still free to serve in the OPC, either by refusing to serve the Lord's Supper at his congregation, or by going to another congregation. For the Canadian Reformed Churches to now receive this man is, I think, a grave error. While perhaps the CRCs are right in this matter, and we are wrong, by receiving him before we have as a denomination truly considered the whole matter, or had a chance to come to the same understanding as you, would present an unnecessary block to our growth in grace.

Even if all the possible steps have been taken, even then I question the wisdom of receiving Mr. Hofford. If we demand of all other parts of the Reformed world exactly the same practice as we have, and then reject them if they err in just one area, then there will be no contact and no fellowship between the few bodies left of people who are truly Reformed. If the question of close communion is a sufficiently important question over which to withdraw from the church and establish independency, as Mr. Hofford has done, then it would be a sufficient reason to break the fraternal relationship that we have with you. But I do not judge it to be so, and I hope the tenu-

ous link between us will not be broken.

If Mr. Hofford is received into your church, it will not automatically mean the end of our fraternal relations, but it will most certainly put a strain on them. This is of particular concern to me, for I personally doubt the ability of the OPC to survive, and when and if it collapses under the strain of mis-guided ecumenicism, I and people like me would like to have some organized church to flee to. Further, it may even accelerate the process of the disintegration of the OPC, something which I am loathe to see.

I hope that my remarks here might give you perhaps another sidelight on this issue, that we together in Christ might grow up in our unity in Him and in the Reformed faith that we both hold so precious.

Yours in Christ,
STEVE LARSON, Pastor

Dear Brothers:

I write to you in response to the article entitled, "Comment: An Untimely and Rash Secession?" in the January 27 issue of the *Clarion*. I was present at the general assembly last year when it considered the appeal of my friend Barry Hofford. I believe that you have seriously misrepresented the OPC in your reporting.

You state that Mr. Hofford "was forced to administer the Lord's Supper in a manner not in accordance with the requirements of the Word of God." The OPC to my knowledge has never done this in its history. Our church is not in the business of forcing people to disobey the Word of God. We strive to urge people to obey — not disobey — that very Word of God. And when a brother has a different understanding of the Word of God, he is not forced against his conscience. In fact, as you report later in your article, pastor Hofford's session made arrangements for another minister to officiate at the Lord's Supper when Mr. Hofford could not conscientiously lead it. I believe that your published statement comes so close to being slander that you should correct it in a further issue of your publication.

In your article you also indicated twice that either the Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic or the general assembly did not give grounds for decisions and did not deal with the Biblical argumentation of the appellants. That again seems to be a misrepresentation of the facts. The original "report of the Special Committee on Restricted Communion" that was issued by the Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic on April 15, 1972 (and please note that it was co-authored by pastor Hofford!) includes four pages of Biblical argumentation and grounds for the present practice in the OPC. I also have before me a ten-page

"report of the Special Committee of Five to deal with the Complaint against the Burtonsville Session" that was adopted by the Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic on April 15, 1983. It deals extensively with the grounds and Scriptural support for both the position of the OPC and that of Mr. Hofford.

Finally, the report of the Advisory Committee that handled this matter at our general assembly in 1983 dealt point by point with the nine questions raised in the complaint of pastor Hofford. Essentially, the complaint stated that the session of pastor Hofford's church had erred in its decision. The general assembly's report includes ten pages of Biblical argumentation and grounds for saying that the session had acted properly. Furthermore, the 1972 report of the Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic was commended to all the congregations in the OPC for its study — and as I have noted, that study includes further exegetical material. It is unfortunate that you left the impression that the OPC did not — and would not — deal with the Biblical material in question.

Not to be convinced by the Biblical presentation of a person is quite different from saying that the person did not deal with the relevant Biblical material. The distinction was lost upon Mr. Hofford, and perhaps also upon you.

Cordially in Christ,
R.W. SCHMURR
General Secretary

The Editorial Committee: (*shortened, J.G.*)

The "Comment: an untimely and rash secession?," written by Cl. S(tam) in *Clarion*, No. 2, Vol. 33, page 31, contains a few serious errors which distort the facts of the Hofford secession, and may lead to misunderstandings. Rev. Stam points out the necessity of having the true facts but, apparently, has misunderstood some of them, which I am able to correct having been at least as much involved in the same Lord's Supper issue in the OPC as Rev. Hofford. I would appreciate the rectification of these mistakes in a later issue of *Clarion*.

The important mistakes are:

- a. Rev. Hofford's struggle for the closed Lord's Supper table does not go back to 1971.
- b. He was never forced to administer the open communion table.
- c. His secession from the Burtonsville congregation did not take place after the General Assembly (June 1983) but as early as October 1982.

Obviously, some clarification is needed. Rev. Stam mentions correctly that the Burtonsville Session, at the request of Rev. Hofford, petitioned the Presbytery meeting of 1971 in order to clarify the

method of the celebration of the Lord's Supper, which was done, and Rev. Stam quotes properly the contents of the Presbyterian decision. At that moment Rev. Hofford was satisfied and remained satisfied until the early spring of 1982, when he observed an unwed couple, who were living in public sin, actually participating in the Lord's Supper, administered by him. He studied the subject matter again and realized that the Bible clearly demands the closed communion table. Consequently, he changed his views, rejected the open table as un-Biblical and notified the Session that he would not be able to serve the open communion table. Very soon, after some discussion, the Session agreed upon an interim period which they ended in a Session meeting on Sept. 30, 1982. The Session received twelve days later, namely Oct. 12, 1982, a letter of resignation of Rev. Hofford. It is important to note that Rev. Hofford has stated more than once that neither the Session nor other office-bearers put pressure on him or tried to force him into resignation, but that it was, as far as he was concerned, absolutely a voluntary action. Besides, it was a step which he took, after having carefully considered and discussed the consequences which were pointed out to him by his friends in order to persuade him not to resign. His resignation was accepted by the Session and the congregation, and that means, in the Presbyterian system, that he had divorced himself completely from the Burtonsville congregation. He was neither the pastor, nor a member of it. (ministers are not members of any congregation but are members of the Presbytery, whatever that means). Apparently, Rev. Hofford was well aware of the broken relationship for, from that time on, he and his family did not attend the regular worship services, except on a few, rare occasions.

In other words, the so-called struggle of pastor Hofford about the closed communion table lasted from Spring 1982 until his resignation in October, a matter of no more than 9 months. After that time, he probably prepared himself for the General Assembly, but that can hardly be called a struggle. It is interesting to note that the above mentioned sequence of events show that Rev. Hofford never was forced to serve the open communion table against his wishes. As soon as he notified the Session of his changed views, the interim period became effective, in which the communion table was closed, and after the interim period he had resigned.

As a matter of fact, the Act of Secession and Succession is based on a falsehood. Rev. Hofford calls himself in this Act the true shepherd of the Burtonsville

congregation, and he calls upon the sheep to follow him in order to continue the true church of Christ. However, the Act is dated June 1983 and he, as a hireling, had forsaken the sheep when they needed him most, on October 1982. At the time of the Act of Secession, he was not their shepherd, yet, he not only calls himself so but implies that his demand of obedience to his urgent appeal, is based on his office of pastor in Burtonsville.

Rev. Hofford implies in his Act of Secession that the Burtonsville congregation has changed from a true church into a false church. That is not true either. The Burtonsville Church has not changed but Rev. Hofford has changed. The interim period decision was not a change in the attitude of the Session, but a pragmatic decision in order to gain time for a better understanding. Rev. Hofford had a change of heart, and he created a problem, when he demanded, very properly, that the Session should submit to the Bible. The problem was, and is, that the Session had never done it and were unwilling even to consider the possibility of it. Therefore, it is such a great pity that he resigned before the Session could act publicly on this, very Scriptural demand.

I do not intend to elaborate the Hofford case much more in this letter. Yet, a few words must be added in reference to the views of Elliot and Stam. To begin with, both of them forget that the USA is not comparable with The Netherlands where all kind of publications will take up such issues and write about it so that everybody could become informed by reading the papers. In the USA, it is extremely difficult to bring any controversial issue to the attention of the members of the OPC, or even to the elders or ministers. No periodical is available in which the pro's and con's of such issues may be discussed. Therefore, even a new decision of the Presbytery or the General Assembly means only that a few ministers, e.g. less than ten, may study the issue somewhat but the rest of the OPC hears only the decisions of the General Assembly and have no opportunity to look farther into it, unless they have access to good literature and are able to study independently. Next, the method of working of the General Assembly makes it next to impossible to make Biblical decisions. The Lord's Supper issue is a very good example. Neither the Advisory Committee, who received the supporting material two days or so before the General Assembly meeting, nor the members of the General Assembly had the opportunity, or were given the opportunity, to study the material. It is very sad that the General Assembly of the OPC decides such an important doctrinal issue as the closed

Lord's Supper Table by means of a majority vote by voters who do not understand the issue, without even considering the possibility of a thorough Biblical study, or seriously weighing the Scriptural arguments of the complainants. Mr. Elliot is wrong in expecting a more Biblical way of handling by a future Assembly, unless that future Assembly would be willing to send all the material, pro and con the issue, many weeks ahead of the Assembly, to all the OP Churches.

I do not even think that Rev. Stam is right when he suggests that the OPC may be influenced in this matter by the Can. Ref. Churches. It seems to me, that we have to direct our attention more to the local churches than to the ecclesiastical assemblies. Even today, many local OP congregations cannot be called false churches.

Obviously, it was, of course, after the decision of the General Assembly, the proper action in Burtonsville to try to begin the Church of Christ in that area. Nonetheless, it is not allowed to base a church on falsehoods and un-Scriptural thinking. It is such a very sad thing that Rev. Hofford with his very Biblical start, has ended up with this Act of Secession and all his letters of excommunication in which he excommunicated everybody who did not agree with him. His action has alienated nearly everyone who sympathized with the issue and have made it for any true believer impossible to follow him. It is such a pity for other ways of coming to a Reformed church were suggested to him, which were absolutely Biblical, but which he declined. The situation has become very complex due to all these rather strange circumstances, but it is beyond the scope of this write-up to give more details, for its purpose was only to straighten out the above mentioned errors.

A. VAN DER JAGT
8502 Mary Beth Way
Ellicott City, MD 21043
USA

COMMENT:

I seem to have made a lot of mistakes in my COMMENT of January 27th, 1984 (*Clarion*, Vol. 33, No. 2) about the happenings with Rev. B.R. Hofford and others in Burtonsville, Maryland. I am considered guilty of "a dangerous publication" and even serious misrepresentation that borders on "slander." There is one mistake no one noticed: J.P. Elliot is not a member of the OPC, but an elder in the PCA, and although many will deem that fact to be of little significance, I thought a correction was in place.

It is best to let these "Letters to the Editor" speak mostly for themselves, and I will not offer a lengthy rebuttal. Let me, however, make a few remarks on the

main objections, listed conveniently by A. vanderJagt and shared with others.

1. Hofford's struggle for the closed Lord's Supper table does not go back to 1971? I wrote that Hofford's *objections* and the *matter* of communion date back to 1971, for in that year an ecclesiastical assembly *first* dealt with the issue. No one should deny this documented *fact*. I do not know how much Rev. Hofford struggled with the issue between 1971 and 1982, but it is evident that his objections were not removed and that he became increasingly concerned as time progressed. My point was simply: the issue itself is not one of recent years, but goes back many years, even before A. vanderJagt entered on the Burtonsville scene. It is also evident that when Hofford did pursue the matter and brought it (again) before the Presbytery and also the General Assembly, the appeal was denied.

2. Hofford was never *forced* to administer the open communion table? The letter-writers are not in total agreement here. Mr. Schmurr and A. vanderJagt think that *no one* forced Hofford to do this, while Rev. Larson suggests that Rev. Hofford may have been compelled to serve the Lord's Supper improperly by his *session*. I think that it depends here on how you look at things. I now understand that in the OPC a minister is not *forced* to anything really. If he disagrees with decisions of his session, he may resign from the session and yet remain a certified minister in the Presbytery! Rev. Hofford was forced by implication to do one of two things:

- a. administer the Lord's Supper as decided by the session
- b. resign from the session, and be "minister at large" in the Presbytery, seeking another charge in the OPC.

Not being able to do the first, the only way left within the OP form of Church Government was to resign. One may deplore the fact that Rev. Hofford decided to resign (a legal step within the OP system!) but one must not cover up the reason: otherwise he would *have* to administer the open table. It was a matter of complying or resigning. Is this not a form of "forcing"?

3. A. vanderJagt might possibly be confusing Reformed and Presbyterian Church polity. When a minister resigns in the Reformed Churches, he ceases to be minister altogether. When a minister resigns in the OP from his *session*, he remains a minister in full rights in the Presbytery. Hofford obviously felt that although he broke with the



Maranatha Home, Burlington, ON

This 62-unit Senior Citizens complex, in operation since 1976, is owned by the Hamilton District Christian Senior Citizens Homes Inc., a non-profit foundation.

The award-winning design is located at 3260 New Street, Burlington, ON, within walking distance from shopping, has bus stop at door, and within a few blocks from Ebenezer Canadian Reformed Church and Burlington Christian Reformed Church. The services from both Churches are available in all units, or any activities that are held in their main auditorium. Public health service including nurse and doctor on regular scheduled basis. Plus all other regular service like elevator, private balconies, laundry room, etc.

Monthly rental as of July 1, 1984 will be \$220.00. There are a number of units available under a special subsidy program with the government for as low as

Letters to the Editor, continued.

- elders of Burtonsville, he still retained responsibility for the congregation of Burtonsville, and as the documents show, did not secede until *after* the decision of the General Assembly. It has become clear to me that Rev. Hofford did not fully understand the implications of "resigning" from the session. It has also become clear to me that Hofford did not consider his resignation to be a divorcing of all ties with the Burtonsville Church. The problem, I fear, lies not so much with Hofford as with the rule that a minister can resign and yet remain a minister. The Rev. Hofford stayed in Burtonsville, and continued to appeal, also to the local church to conform to the Scriptures. That's not the profile of a hireling.
4. A final remark. I am only an outsider in this matter, as is Mr. Elliot. There is a tendency to reduce differences to a matter of "background" or "historical development." Some differences can indeed be traced back to these things. The matter of the celebration of the Lord's Supper is, in my understanding, somewhat more serious. Is the manner of administering the sacraments not one of the marks of true Church?

CL. STAM

25% of the total income. Special consideration will be given to these applicants.

At a recent Annual Meeting of the Directors, it was stated that the building and grounds were in good condition, and the financial affairs in good order. The Board reelected the following: Arie J. Hordyk, President; J. Heeringa, Vice-President; J. van der Woerd, Secretary and J. Huisman, Treasurer.

Although there are no vacancies at present, any and all applications are considered on the basis of urgency. Almost all tenants are Dutch immigrants and belong to one of the local Reformed Churches.

Application forms may be requested at suite 109, 3260 New Street, Burlington, ON L7N 3L4 (phone 416-681-0311).

Executive Committee meeting, Canadian Reformed Teachers' College Association, Hamilton, ON, April 6, 1984.

The chairman, G. Nordeman, begins the meeting in the customary Christian manner.

Although our treasurer is away on vacation, he did not neglect to send the usual monthly report for discussion by the board.

A letter is received from the Finance Committee of the Theological College re facility sharing. Our Building Committee will discuss this matter further with said committee.

The Public Relations Committee presents its report along with the introduction of the special project fund raising plans for items such as a photocopier.

The principal also gives his report. He mentions something about the special Art workshops that are being conducted.

Enrollment for next year is discussed. There are again quite a number of applications for the three-year program. The one-year program cannot be offered next year due to insufficient enrollment.

Some arrangements for the first graduation evening for May 25, 1984 are reported. This will be held in the Cornerstone Canadian Reformed Church at Hamilton. The general membership and all interested persons are invited to attend. Dr. J. Faber will present the graduation address, D.V.

The next meeting is scheduled for May 18, 1984.

The meeting is ended in prayer.

For the executive,
C.J. NOBELS

Consulaat-Generaal Der Nederlanden CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE NETHERLANDS

One Dundas Street West
Box 2, Suite 2106
Toronto, Ontario M5G 1Z3
Phone: (416) 598-2520

OPSPORING ADRESSEN:

ALBERS, Hendrikus Johannes, geboren op 1 maart 1919 te Arnhem, laatstbekende adres in Nederland: Akkerstraat 24, Oss, naar Canada vertrokken op 11 juni 1952.

BEUMER, Hendrik A., geboren op 16 juni 1919, laatstbekende adres in Nederland: v.d. Lindenstraat 8, Dieren (De Steeg), naar Canada vertrokken op 23 mei 1957.

BOXEM, Johannes, geboren op 27 juni 1919, laatstbekende adres in Nederland Randweg 98, Alblaserdam, naar Canada vertrokken op 20 april 1954 met bestemming Winnipeg.

BLOKKER, V.J., geboren op 10 juni 1925 te Grootebroek.

VAN CAPPELLEVEEN, Tjeerd Hayo Guy, geboren op 3 januari 1972, laatstbekende woonplaats: Hoorn NH, naar Canada vertrokken op 21 juni 1983.

VAN DORT, Jacobus, geboren op 2 april 1919 te Bergen op Zoom, laatstbekende adres in Nederland: Dubbelstraat 65A, Bergen op Zoom, naar Canada vertrokken op 18 juni 1955.

DIEKMEIER, Johan Diedrich, geboren op 29 januari 1909, laatstbekende woonplaats: Rotterdam, naar Canada vertrokken in augustus 1911.

VAN DIJK, Gerben, geboren op 11 november 1956 te Groningen, laatstbekende woonplaats: Groningen, naar Canada vertrokken op 27 juni 1983.

EENENNAAM, Johan Andre, geboren op 20 september 1946, laatstbekende adres in Nederland: Leinweberlaan 26, Driebergen-Rijsenburg, naar Canada vertrokken op 14 oktober 1980.

HOOGENBOOM, Gerda, geboren op 22 maart 1959 to Rockanje, laatstbekende adres: IBB-laan 99, Utrecht, naar Canada vertrokken op 8 april 1982.

VAN DER MEIJ, Jacobus, geboren op 12 november 1940, laatstbekende woonplaats: Waddinxveen, naar Canada vertrokken op 2 januari 1984.

The Consul-Generaal,
voor deze:-
Mevr. G. SCHITZLER
Fgd. KANSELIER

CHURCH NEWS

CALLED and ACCEPTED
to Toronto, ON

REV. R.N. GLEASON
of Rijswijk, Z.H., The Netherlands



Hello Busy Beavers,

How thankful we are it's Springtime again!
Springtime is flower time.

Tulips, daffodils, crocuses, forsythia — you know them all.
Isn't it great to see them all back?

But can you also name hyacinths, forget-me-nots, chives,
and irises?

Don't you think it's just a miracle how all the flowers come
back?

Flower Emblems

Some wild spring flowers are the emblems of Canada's
provinces.

Can you match each of the floral emblems with the right
province or territory?

Mayflower
Dogwood
Prairie lily
Wild rose
Lily
Pitcher plant
Crocus
Trillium
Fireweed
Blue violet
Mountain avens
Lady's slipper

Yukon Territory
British Columbia
Alberta
Saskatchewan
Manitoba
Ontario
Quebec
New Brunswick
Nova Scotia
Prince Edward Island
Newfoundland
Northwest Territories



Sent in by Busy Beaver *Kimberley Vanderzwaag*.

The Bible also speaks about Spring.
See if you can fill in the blanks.
Helps are given.

"For lo, the winter is _____,
the rain is _____ and _____."

The flowers appear on the _____,
the time of _____ has come,
and the voice of the _____
is heard in our _____.

The fig tree puts forth its _____,
and the vines are in _____;
they give forth _____." Song of Solomon 2:11-13

"When Thou sendest forth Thy Spirit, they are _____;
and Thou _____ the face of the _____."

Psalm 104:30

FOR YOU TO DO

1. Find out which of the floral emblems is a flower that blooms while there is still SNOW on the ground.
2. Find out which of the floral emblems is an INSECT EATING PLANT!

Will you write and let me know, and share with the other
Busy Beavers?

* * *

Here is a sample of Busy Beaver *Carol Witteveen's* calligraphy. (If you have some to show us, please send it in!)

Aunt Betty
a b c d e f g

Time for birthday wishes! We all join in wishing all the
Busy Beavers celebrating their birthday in May a very happy
birthday and many happy returns of the day. May the Lord bless
and keep you all in the year ahead. Here's hoping you have
a really great day celebrating with your family and friends.

MAY

Henrietta Huinink	2	Carol Doesburg	20
Hilda Buitenhuis	4	Tracy Bos	21
Mary-Ann Van Woudenberg	4	Cecile Van Woudenberg	21
Donna Pieffers	7	Jason Wierenga	22
Vicky Van Egmond	7	Derek Hoogstra	23
Lawrence Stam	8	Becky Heemskerck	25
Linda Knol	10	Jim Witteveen	26
Jody De Groot	13	Sylvia Admiraal	28
Les Haan	17	Michelle De Haas	28
Jennifer Siebenga	18	Donald Woltjer	29
Cynthia Barendregt	19	Bryan Bos	31

RIDDLES FOR YOU

Thanks go to Busy Beavers *Irma Van Ellenberg, Sylvia Leffers, Bethy Barendregt, and Jason Wierenga.*

1. How does a football player go fishing?
2. What happened after two frogs got married?
3. What is the favourite song of a plow horse?
4. What kind of a bush does a fox sit under in a rainstorm?
5. Why didn't the little girl take the bus?
6. When is a pig like ink?
7. Where was Tom when the lights went out?

Answers: 1. With his tackle 2. They lived happily ever after
3. "Rein, rein go away." 4. A wet one 5. Because she knew
her mother would make her take it back. 6. When it's in a
pen! 7. In the dark.